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TAGS: PREL PARM KPKO UNSC IZ
SUBJECT: UN/IRAQ: SYG REPLIES TO IRAQI FOREIGN MINISTER'S LETTERS ON UNIKOM

REF: A. USUN 726
 1B. USUN 731

11. (U) SYG ANNAN CIRCULATED TO THE COUNCIL HIS MARCH 17 RESPONSE LETTER TO IRAQI FM NAJI SABRI AL-HADITHI'S MARCH 13 AND 16 LETTERS REQUESTING THAT UNIKOM NOT BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE DMZ (REF A AND B). THE SYG RESPONDED THAT ALL UN PERSONNEL WOULD BE TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWN FROM IRAQ, THEREFORE SUSPENDING UN PROGRAMS "DE FACTO." HE STATED, HOWEVER, THAT "ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES CAN BE RESUMED AS SOON AS THE SITUATION PERMITS THE RETURN OF UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL TO IRAQ WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL." THE FULL TEXT OF ANNAN'S LETTER IS INCLUDED AT PARA 2.

12. (U) BEGIN TEXT.

HIS EXCELLENCY
MR. NAJI SABRI
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ
BAGHDAD

17 MARCH 2003

EXCELLENCY,

ON SUNDAY 16 MARCH 2003, THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AND THE UNITED STATES CONVEYED TO ME WARNINGS REGARDING THE CONTINUED SAFETY AND SECURITY OF UN PERSONNEL PRESENT IN THE TERRITORY OF IRAQ. SIMILAR WARNINGS WERE TRANSMITTED TO DR. EL-BARADEI OF (THE) IAEA AND DR. HANS BLIX, THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF UNMOVIC.

AFTER CONSULTING WITH DR. EL-BARADEI, DR. BLIX AND SENIOR UN OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIVITIES OF UN PERSONNEL IN IRAQ, I DECIDED THIS MORNING THAT, SINCE I WAS NO LONGER IN A POSITION TO GUARANTEE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THESE PERSONNEL, I WAS OBLIGED TO WITHDRAW TEMPORARILY ALL REMAINING HUMANITARIAN PERSONNEL NUMBERING SOME 195 INTERNATIONAL STAFF INCLUDING THE PERSONNEL OF COTECNA AND SAYBOLT, THE REMAINING 135 UNMOVIC STAFF (WHICH INCLUDES WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF DR. EL-BARADEI 5 IAEA STAFF), AS WELL AS ALL UNIKOM MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FROM IRAQ.

I AM WELL AWARE THAT THESE MEASURES WILL LEAD TO THE SUSPENSION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES IN IRAQ PURSUANT TO RESOLUTION 986 (1995), AS WELL AS THE WORK OF BOTH UNMOVIC AND UNIKOM. HOWEVER, THE THREAT TO THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSONNEL CONCERNED HAS IN EFFECT RENDERED THEIR MANDATES INOPERABLE.

FOR THE RECORD, I WISH TO STATE THAT I REGARD THOSE ACTIVITIES AS SUSPENDED DE FACTO. THE MANDATES ESTABLISHED BY THE RELEVANT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS UNDER WHICH THESE ACTIVITIES ARE CARRIED OUT REMAIN IN FORCE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE SECURITY COUNCIL SHOULD DECIDE OTHERWISE.

I INFORMED THE MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL OF MY DECISION IN THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE THIS MORNING AND THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TOOK NOTE OF MY DECISION.

ALTHOUGH THIS DECISION WAS ESSENTIAL FOR THE REASONS INDICATED, I SHOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOUR GOVERNMENT THAT THE UNITED NATIONS CONTINUES TO BE COMMITTED TO ASSISTING THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ WHO HAVE SUFFERED SUCH HARDSHIP AND HAVE DEPENDED FOR SUPPORT ON THE OIL-FOR-FOOD PROGRAMME. THE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES CAN BE RESUMED AS SOON AS THE SITUATION PERMITS THE RETURN OF UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL TO IRAQ WITH THE AUTHORITY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, WHICH IS RECEPTIVE TO THIS APPROACH.

PLEASE ACCEPT, EXCELLENCY, THE ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION.

(SIGNED)
KOFI A. ANNAN

END TEXT.

NEGROPONTE